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THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION WHICH WE NEED.

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# S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AT MUSIC HALL, BOSTON,

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 1858.

BY

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MINISTER OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY.

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# S E R M O N .

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“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” — **MATT. v. 48.**

Last Sunday I said something of a False and True Revival of Religion. To-day I continue the same theme, asking your attention to some thoughts on the Revival of Religion which we *need*, and the Way to bring it to pass.

In the World of Man there is nothing so joyous as real natural religion. It is the centremost of all delights. Other high joys are branches, this the root they run back to, spring out of, and grow up from. I feel gratitude to many a man and woman who has helped me in my life, but to none such thankfulness as I owe my mother, my father, my sister, for the pains they took to develop this innermost of all the facts of Consciousness. I cannot remember the earliest twilight of religion, when first I felt the “dayspring from on high,” not even the rising of that sun which sheds such light to all my being. I trust it will not reach its noon until I have seen some four or five score years, but will rise higher, shining with more perpendicular glory until I end my mortal life. For religion grows not old. Like God, it flourishes in perpetual youth.

I too have experienced the higher joys of life; thereof not many men know better what is great in bulk; few more what is nice and exquisite in kind. Have science, letters, success, a joy to give? I know it reasonably well. Is there joy in contending with difficulties? I have had my part. Are there pleasures of affection? I have tasted from that golden cup, and by those I love can drink vicariously at many a spring my lips directly never touch. But dear and blessed as are all these things, I count them cheap compared with my delight in God. These I could renounce and still be blessed, at least resigned; but not to know the Father and Mother of the world, to feel shut out from that causal and providential Love, which creates all from itself, I should go mad and die at once, or live a

maimed, brutal life, and perish like a fool. But of this deep joy, I cannot speak save in the most general terms. 'Tis profane to talk of such things even to most intimate friends. The handsome shapes of our innermost life are chastely veiled from all the world; there I am my own high priest, and into that Holy of Holies none but myself and Thou, oh God! can ever come.

Does not mankind also rate its religious consciousness thus high? Whom does it honor most? Always its heroes of the soul. Men with genius for religion. Such men as Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, they are above all human names. None else have such millions bowing thereto; none others are worshipped so as gods. How thankful we are to whoever brings religious truths! Mankind is loyal, and when it sees its King, takes him to its heart and honors him forever. Thankful to those who helped us, with what sympathy do we look on persons trying to attain religious excellence! No romance is so attractive to us all as the story of a man longing after God and seeking rest for the soul. How do you and I, seeing such, wish to go to this child crying in the darkness, wet and numb with cold, and like a great Saint Christopher to take him on our shoulders and thus ferry him across the stream, warming his limbs while we bear him wrapped in our mantle, and then put a candle in his lantern and bread in his pouch and bid him “God speed you my brother! You will find day bye and bye.”

When a great truth stirs the feelings infinite within us, how do we love to show the cause thereof to other men, and set slips from the tree of life in their gardens to make a new Paradise! Worldly ambition is singular—for itself alone; the passion of love is dual—for him and her; but the affection of religion is universal-plural, embracing God and all his



world within rejoicing arms. Nothing is so socializing as piety: my Father and my Mother, they are also yours.

No man is complete without the culture of the religious element; no high faculty perfect without help from that. I see great naturalists without it, great politicians, great artists; not great *men*. Nay, their special science, politics, art, is less philosophic, statesmanlike, æsthetic, for lack of this wholeness and thorough health within the man's interior. The notes of music, ground out on a hand-organ in the street, tell me if their composer had ever listened to the quiring of these birds of Paradise.

There is a story,—perhaps some of you never heard it,—that out of Parian stone a great Christian artist in the dark ages, once carved a statue of the Virgin Mary—the Church's ideal woman. It was transcendent of mortality, angelic, disdainful of earth, fit only for the devotional delights of heaven, not womanly duty on earth, and sympathy with suffering and sinful men. He wrought so fair that Phidias and Praxiteles and many a Heathen more who knew the wondrous art to transfigure marble into life, through their open graves came back from heaven to look thereon; and filled with joy at this new type of womanhood, so different from the Aphrodites and Athenas, so free alike from sensual taint and oligarchic pride of intellect and power, with their cold, dumb, visionary mouths, they kissed the plastic hand which wrought the wondrous work. But Mary herself—no queenly virgin transcending earth, but peasant Joseph's honest wife and natural mother of his boy—came also back from her heavenly transfiguration. Well pleased she looked thereon, but was not quite content, loving the natural woman of humanity, a carpenter's wife and mother to boys and girls in Nazareth, more than she loved a non-human, transcendental virgin of the Church's creed, fit only for heavenly joy; and so she put a live branch of Hebrew lilies, sweet as these New England violets, wet with dew, into the statue's folded hand. Fair were they as the marble, but living flowers, which grew out of the hard black ground, and bore their seed within them, to fill the earth with future loveliness. And this piece of actual nature, surpassing the sculptor's art, so criticised his dreamy stone, that when he woke and saw it there, he felt rebuked and took the heavenly hint, and ever after fashioned his Madonnas complete

women, of nobler and more actual shape—not monsters, virgins of the sky, but women, sisters, wives, mothers, for the world of time, the mortal earthly beauty kept and made more fair and human by its wholeness and its complete and perfect trust in the dear God who fashioned woman's body and inspired her soul. And as the sign that such dear divinity yet touched the common ground, he put the emblematic lilies in the statue's folded hand.

So when I see a man, else grand and beautiful, with transcendent mind and conscience and affections too, but lacking this ultimate finish of religion, I long to plant therein the soul of piety, which shall complete the whole and so make perfect every part—mastering the world of time, but not disdaining it.

I have heard of many conversions,—here is the story of a real one. A man was a drunkard, noisy, violent; he beat his wife and children, nay, his mother. Crossing yonder bridge one dark night, all at once his own conscience spoke in him—"Stop there, Richard! Drink no more!" Not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, he stopped, and swore to drink no more. He became a ~~new~~ man. There was a revival of religion in him,—at least a part of it; ever after he had Temperance, the piety of the flesh. Some of you understand that conversion. To speak as ministers—Jacob wrestles with the devil all night, flings him, and goes off conqueror, the devil down, and the man up for all time. Honor to conversions of this stamp!

What a joy it would be if there could come to pass a real Revival of Religion, of Piety and Morality, in the church of America—I mean among the thirty thousand Protestant ministers and the thirty hundred thousand Protestant church members;—a Revival of Religion which should be qualitatively nice and quantitatively large,—a great, new growth of the soul; such a healthy bloom of piety as would make a White-Sunday all over the land, prophetic of whole Messianic harvests of Piety and Morality, which were to come! Why, if such a thing were to take place, and I were Governor of Massachusetts or President of the United States, though it were seed-time, or harvest-time, war-time even, I would issue my proclamation for a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise to the dear God who had given such gifts unto men. I would ask the people to come together in their meeting-houses, look each other in the face, take each other by the hand, embrace, and



sing their psalms of praise to the infinite Father and Mother, whose kingdom had come on earth, and was shining as the sun from east to west. I would call on great orators for choicest speech; on the poets, "blest with the vision and the faculty divine" and furnished with "the accomplishment of verse," to sing the High Song and Canticles of joy,—the great Psalm of glorifying praise to Him who is Power, Wisdom, Justice, Love. Nay, I would send my Ambassadors to the nations of the earth, saying, "Come and rejoice with me, for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost, and is found." Nay, if such a movement went on in England, France, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, I would ask you to spare me for awhile, and would strike work to-morrow, that I might go and sacrament my eyes with the sight of the happy people that is in such a case. I would learn how that great salvation was brought about, and fetch home in my garments the Promethean seed of that fire, to kindle a flame all over this land.

Only think of it! a Revival of piety, a new power of love to God, and love for all his laws, writ in the flesh and spirit, mind and conscience, heart and soul, and a consequent love of morality—the will and conscience going side by side, like Caleb and Joshua, bringing home such clusters from the promised land; an increase of intellect, power of use, power of beauty, power of truth; a great growth of economy, industry, riches; the heaven of chaste love,—Passion and Affection going hand in hand, taking sweet counsel together, and walking to the house of God in company; the growth of justice, humanity, charity. Only think of it! Forts turned into pleasure grounds; all training-fields "converted" into public gardens; ships of war the penny-posters of the deep; arsenals changed to museums; jails become hospitals; not a gallows in America; slavery all ended—black slavery, white slavery; no murder; no theft; prostitution gone; no bestial lust anywhere, but human love forever; poverty ended; drunkenness all banished; no staggering in the street; not an Irishman drunk,—not even a member of Congress; no kidnapper between the seas; no liar in the chair of Governor or broker; rulers that love the people, enacting justice; ministers teaching them the truths of nature and of human consciousness—proclaiming the real live God, who inspires men to-day, as He dresses these roses in their sweet cloth of gold. Think of

a Revival of Religion such as that, which was bringing that about, which would do it in a hundred years or a thousand! Why, what were all the previous great triumphs of mankind to that? What were the conquests of fire, iron, the invention of ships, letters, powder, the compass, the printing press, the steam engine, telegraph, ether? What were the discovery of America, the English Revolution, the American, the French? Nay, what were these six great historic forms of religion—Brahminic, Hebraistic, Classic, Buddhistic, Christian, Mahommedan—they would be what February and March are to May, July, September and October; what a few weeks of thaw are to a whole summer of flowers and an autumn full of fruit. Why, the very sympathizing sun might pause in his course and gladden his eyes; and the stars of heaven, which have seen their image reflected back in a looking-glass of human blood, might stop and join in that primal mythic psalm, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, to all good willing men."

How much we need a real Revival of Religion! Not a renewal of Ecclesiastic Theology, but a Revival of Piety and Morality in men's hearts.

The people *feel* this need; hence we turn off to look at all new things in religion. We are tired of that old stack of hard, dry, meadow hay, where the Christian herd has so long sought fodder, and been filled with the east wind. We long for the green pastures and sweet grass along the streams which run among the hills; hence we wish to leap over or crawl under or crowd through the bars of this old winter cow-yard of the church, and at least get out of that unwholesome pen and go somewhere, with God to guide us, though we know not whither.

See the growth of Mormonism. Even that has something which mankind needs; else men, and especially women, would not cross the sea three thousand miles wide, and then travel three thousand more by river or by land for its sake. The success of Mormonism is a terrible protest against the enforced celibacy of millions of marriageable women, and the worse than celibacy of so many who are called married, but are not. Fifteen years ago, "Spiritualism" was two women making mysterious noises in Rochester, N. Y. Now it is I know not how many millions of persons, some of them thoughtful, many hungering after God. "Spiritualism" had something to offer which the churches could not give. Nothing comes of nothing; every something has a cause. This



very Revival, foolish as is the conduct of it, selfish as are the managers who pull the strings, —with the people it indicates a profound discontent in the dull death of our churches. God created man a living soul, and he continues such only by feeding on every word which freshly proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The old bibles did for those who wrote them; the old creeds for such as believed. We want the help of the old bibles, the inspiration of the new bibles, ever proceeding from God, who freshly fills the old stars in heaven, and creates new flowers every spring on earth.

I say the people feel this need; but the need itself is greater and deeper than the popular consciousness thereof. We do not know how sick we are. Look at the chaotic state of things in America, which is but like the rest of Christendom. First, there is war. Fenced with a two-fold oceanic ditch, from two to seven thousand miles wide, we yet spend more than thirty millions of dollars every year to hire fighting men, in a time of profound peace; and not one of them fixes bayonet to do mankind good.

Next consider the character of the Federal Government—it is the last place to which you would look for common honesty, for justice to our own nation; just now it is a vulture which eats the nation's vitals out; only the strong giant grows faster than this administration can tear off and swallow down. Men tell us human life is more safe in Constantinople, in Damascus, in Samarcand, in Timbuctoo, than it is in Washington. We are told that we have three murders a fortnight in the Capital of the United States, all the session through. The Government is so busy fillibustering against Cuba, Mexico, Central America, planting slavery in Kansas, that it cannot protect the lives of its own Congressmen in its own Capital.

Next look at slavery. Every seventh man is property—a negro slave; and our Supreme Court says colored people have no rights which we are bound to respect. The Government seeks to spread this blot across the continent, from east to west, from south to north—asks five thousand new soldiers to do it with. A new State knocks at the door, seeking to join the sisterhood of Freedom; the Government says, "You shall not come in free; with bondsmen you may enter."

• Fourth: Look at the antagonistic character of our civilization. So much poverty in the midst of so much riches—so many idlers in so

much industry. How many children in prudent, wealthy, charitable Boston, cannot go to school in winter from lack of clothes! See what fortunes are dishonestly made by men who are only the fillibusters of commerce, robbers in a peaceful way! Our industry even now is a war of business—it is competition, not co-operation. How much power is lost in the friction of our social machinery. There are savages in our civilization. In the south, many of them are slaves—in the north, they are free, but still savages. A black sea of crime lashes the white houses of wealth and comfort, where science, literature, virtue and piety together dwell.

Fifth: Look at the condition of woman. There is no conscious antagonism betwixt men and women; each doubtless unconsciously aims to be more than fair to the other; but no where has woman her natural right. In the market, the state, the church, she is not counted the equal of man. Hence come monstrous evils—prostitution, dependence, lack of individual character, enforced celibacy, not more grateful to maid than to man, meant for neither him nor her; and hence come those marriages which are worse than celibacy itself.

These are the five great evils of mankind to-day, whence many lesser ones proceed—drunkenness, crime in its thousand forms. I do not speak to scold mankind, still less to scold America. In all respects save one, we have the best institutions in the world; and certainly, the human race had never so glorious a welfare as to-day. These evils, they were never before so small. History, it is not a retreat backwards, it is progress forth, upwards, on. These things are not a finality; they are to man's attainable condition what stumbling is to walking, stammering to speech, the boy's clumsy, mistaken scrawl to the clear current writing of the man. We are to outlearn these five evils—war, wicked government, slavery, selfish antagonism in society, the degradation of woman. We shall outgrow these things. God has given us the fittest of all possible means for attaining the end. One of the mightiest of man's helpers is this Religious Faculty in us; this, nothing else, can give us strength to do that work.

The business of the farmer is to organize the vegetative force of the ground, and raise thence the substances which shall feed and clothe mankind. The mechanic is to organize the force of metals, wood, fire, earth, water,



lightning, air, and thereby shape the material things necessary to human needs—to feed, clothe, house, and heal mankind; corn he must turn to bread, cotton and wool to cloth, the clay, the forest, the rock, to houses; poison to medicine. The philosopher is to translate the facts of nature, from matter into mind, making them into thoughts, ideas of consciousness; then to show us how to use the powers of nature, for the farmer's and mechanic's work. The statesman is to organize the nation's power, its matter and its mind, its bodily force, its wealth, intelligence, justice, love, charity, religion, so that men shall live in peace together at home, with peace abroad, having security for the person, the substance of manhood, and for property, the accident of manhood; so that each shall help all, and all enjoy the special genius God gives to each.

It is the business of the minister to waken, quicken, strengthen, and guide the religious faculty, and so gain for us a great general power to help the individual man in his development of body and of spirit. But man is social. The individual alone is a wild man; it is only in society that noble individualism is instantially possible. While these five evils just named continue, individual men will be as now. It is in the great social mill that men are made what they are. Here and there may be one so born, that society cannot shape, bleach, or dye him. He takes no form or color, save from his mother's bosom; he has an impenetrable genius from his birth,—plastic to mould others, not pliant, to be shaped or dyed. But in ninety-nine hundredths of our character most men are what society makes them. Compare Old England and New England, the children of Cove Place with the children of Beacon Street, to see the truth of this, the power of circumstances over the soul.

It is the minister's business not only to waken, strengthen, and quicken the religious power, and point to this end, but also to diffuse the ideas which shall mould society, so that it can rear noble men, with all their natural powers developed well.

The minister is the teacher of the church; not a master; a servant to teach. A normal church is a body of men, assembling to promote Religion, Piety and Morality. Its business is, first, protective at home—to promote piety and morality in its own members; and second, it is diffusive abroad—to promote piety and morality in all the world according to its strength: for duty is proportionate to power to

do; and where the power is little, so is the duty, where much, there great. So a church must protest against all wrong which it knows to be wrong; promote all right which it knows to be right. It is a church for that very purpose, and nothing less. The minister is to help do that work; to lead in it. He must be in advance of mankind in what pertains to religion—to all religion, individual, social. Else he cannot teach; he is no minister to work and serve, only an idler to be worked for and ministered unto.

No doubt there must be primary churches, to teach the A, B, C, of religion, and ministers fit for that work of nursing babies; and also academic and collegiate churches, and ministers for that grand function. Let neither despise the other. So, then, the function of a real church of religion will be partly critical, to war against the wrong, partly creative, to show us the right and guide us thither, at least thitherward.

We have thirty thousand Protestant ministers in the United States, supported at the public charge, and to do this very work, for so the people mean. They are not rich; are not rich men's sons. As a class, they have an education which is costly, even where it is not precious; which is often paid for directly by the people's work. All education is thus paid for indirectly, for in that money all human accounts are at last settled, in the great clearing-house of mankind. Work is the only coin which is current the world over. Therein do you pay for the murders which are committed at Washington, and for the Angels of Mercy, who in Boston carry your beneficence from house to house, and take unlawful babies newly born, and set them in religious homes, to grow up to nobleness. In that coin we pay for all things,—the minister's education amongst others. The ministers come mainly from that class of people who are most affected by religious emotions and ideas, where human sympathies are the strongest. They seldom are borne by the miserably poor, or the ruinously rich. They have two advantages: Birth in the middle class, where they touch the ground and touch the sky; and superior culture above that class. Add to this, moreover, they commonly enter the ministry with good motives, more self-denial than self-indulgence; they are usually free from gross vices, the crimes of passion; they are the most charitable of alms-giving men; they have the best opportunities to teach the churches, and to help promote the crit-



ical and creative function which belongs thereto.

But now, alas! taken as a class, they do no such thing,—they attempt none such. They do not count it their business to remove any one of those five great social evils, and so enable society to raise up noble individual men. Nay, they seldom take much pains to remove the lesser evils which have leaked out from those five great tubs of malarious poison. Let the prayers of the Protestant churches be answered to-night; let all the white men and women in the United States be converted to the Ecclesiastic Theology which is taught in Orthodox meeting houses; let the conversion take in all the babies who know their right hand from their left—suppose there are fifteen millions who are “brought under,” and “bowed down,” as they properly call it, and made to believe in the creeds of the Revival ministers; let all these be added to the Church next Sunday, and take their communion of baker’s bread and grocer’s wine,—it would not abate one of those five great evils—War, Political Corruption, Slavery, Selfish Antagonism in Society, nor the Degradation of Woman! Such a conversion is not a step towards removing any one of these evils—nay, it is a step away from that work. Such a conversion would entail inferiority on woman; retard the progress of civilization, the moralization of mankind; add to the fetters of the slave; strengthen the tyrant’s hand; increase the chances of prospective war, and add to its horrors when it broke out. For it would bless all these iniquities in the name of God, and justify them out of the Old Testament and the New—it is quite easy to do so. Nay, suppose you should convert the three millions of African slaves over ten years old, not one of them would dare thereafter to run away from his master, or strike that master down. Such conversions would unman the negro slave!

Why is all this? Two months ago, I spoke of the False Method of Theology. The Christian Church has followed that method, and while teaching many truths and doing very great service to mankind—which I should be the last to deny—it has made three monstrous errors. Here they are.

First, it has a false conception of God;—its God is a devil, who means damnation.

Second, it has a false conception of Man;—its man is a worm, who is religiously good for nothing; the “natural man” fit only for damnation.

Third, it has a false conception of Religion;—its Religion is to save man from hell, and it is fit only for that. But it does not do even that for more than one out of a thousand; for the other nine hundred and ninety-nine, it is absolutely good for nothing on earth or beneath it; and the one saved is not borne to heaven on mighty wings of piety and morality, fanning the thin, cold air of the world, but by the magic-miracle of the atonement, which turns off God’s wrath, and carries man into eternal joy which he has done nothing to merit and to earn.

These Ideas are the minister’s tools to work with. I am not scolding him, only stating facts. Poor man! he is far more to be pitied than blamed. He sees a vast amount of evil in the world, and thinks it all a finality; it is God’s will, and his decree that it shall last forever. The evil cannot be removed here and now,—it is in the nature of things; and even in the next life, it will never be diminished to all eternity. Man cannot remove it; God will not; for He loves none but Church members, who believe the Church Theology; He will ruin all else;—and damned for once is damned for evermore.

Hence ministers in churches do not make it a principal thing to try and remove these evils, to develop man’s nature, to set the religious faculty, that greatest River of God, to turn the mills of society. They aim chiefly to remove unbelief in ecclesiastical doctrines, to admit men to the church, to save their souls from the wrath of God by belief in the magic of atonement. “No man,” say they, “goes into heaven for his religion, for any merit of his own; with a whole life of piety and morality, ended in the cruelest martyrdom, he cannot buy a ticket of entrance,” while a moment’s belief in the ecclesiastic theology, and joining of a church, will admit a pirate, a kidnapper, a deceitful politician who curses a nation, or a hypocritical priest—it will admit them all to heaven—each man as a “dead-head.”

Do you doubt that the churches of America count not manly religious character and life, but only theological belief, as the one thing needful?—then look at these two facts.

First, the Protestant Churches of America have one great corporation—the Tract Society—wherein many sects work together. The aim is theological—to enforce ecclesiastic doctrines; it is not religious—to promote love to God, and the keeping of his natural laws writ in the very constitution of man. So the Tract



Society protests against none of the great evils I have named. It attacks no popular wickedness; it would save men from the fancied wrath of God by faith in Christ; not by virtue and wisdom save them from actual ignorance, superstition, covetousness, drunkenness, dishonesty. It would save men *in* their sins hereafter, not *from* their sins to-day and here. It has little to say against war, political oppression, slavery, the antagonism of society, the degradation of woman. Even the Bible Society, in which all sects unite, dares not give the New Testament to a single slave, though the American Anti-Slavery Society offer them Five Thousand Dollars if they will spend it thus. Spite of its profession, spite of its good intention, the church is baptized worldliness, professing the ecclesiastical theology as magical means of salvation from the future consequences of a life of wickedness below!

That is the first thing. Next, many Christian ministers think they can tease God to do what they want done; that they can get him to convert men, and if the prayers of the churches centre on one man, he presently "caves in." Now, at a Revival meeting, who is prayed for, prayed at, prayed against? The Ecclesiastical archers do not draw their bow at a venture; it is with good aim. What Saint Sebastian is there who is stuck full of the arrows of Calvinistic imprecation? Is it the sly, corrupt politician? the "democrat" who hates democracy, but under its covert seeks to ruin the people? No; he is orthodox in profession, though atheistic in his public practice and private creed. Is it the able lawyer, who prostitutes his grand talents to bring the most miserable culprit safe from the justice of the law? No; Sunday after Sunday he sits in an orthodox meeting-house, and requires no conversion. Is it the capitalist who rents his shops for drunkeries and gambling dens, his houses for brothels? No; he is sound in the faith. Is it the merchant who trades in Coolies? No; he is a church member, painted with the proper stripe. Is it the Doctor of Divinity who defends Slavery as a Divine institution? Not at all; he believes in the damnation of Unitarians, Universalists, and babies not wet with baptism; he needs no repentance. Is it the trader, whose word is good for nothing, who will always take you in? No; he is out in the street pimping for the prayer-meetings of his sect. Is it the man who sends rum and gunpowder to the negroes of Africa, and fills his ship with slaves for Cuba, half of them cast shrieking to the hungry

waves before it touches land? Oh no; he contributes to the Tract Society. Do men pray for the President of the United States, that in his grand position, with his magnificent opportunities, he may secure to all men the "unalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"?—may take the Golden Rule of this blessed New Testament and make that a meet-wand for the American Government? They ask no such thing. Do they pray that our Supreme Court may "do justly, and lo mercy, and walk humbly with its God"? They pray for no such men; and those they do pray for, they ask only that they may believe the creed, and "come to Christ." To Jesus of Nazareth. It does not mean to come to him who said religion was love to God and love to man! It means only, come to the Catechism and the meeting house!

I do not know how many men, and women too, have labored with me to convert me. Not one ever asked me to increase in Religion, in either part of it—in Piety or Morality; to be more temperate, industrious, truth-telling—quite the opposite of that—more generous, just, charitable, philanthropic, forgiving to my enemies. Not one ever asked me to be a better minister, scholar, neighbor, friend, cousin, uncle, brother, husband. None ever prayed me to love God better, or to keep his commandments more, only to "come to Christ;" and their Christ, it was the Catechism, which tormented me in my infancy, which I sobbed over many a night and wept myself to sleep, and at last made way with the abominable thing, trod it under my feet forever, before I had seen my seventh birth-day. I do not know how many letter-writers, clergymen, laymen, and lay-women visitors, have threatened me with eternal damnation. This one is sure I am to have it at last; these others declare it is coming "summarily." No one ever charged me with any vice, with any lack of virtue or manly excellence; only with disbelief in the Catechism. That is the second thing.

These two things show that the church asks belief in the theology of unreason, not a life of natural piety and morality; and because the ministers work for this, and with tools suited to this end, is it that so many of them pass their lives

"In dropping buckets into empty wells,  
And growing old in drawing nothing up."

These things being so, Ecclesiastical Revivals do no considerable good. They make



superstitious church members, not religious men and women. "They heal the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly" — I mean, they do not heal it at all.

"They skin and film the ulcerous place  
Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,  
Infects unseen."

What is the great obstacle to the liberation of France, Spain, Italy? It is the Roman church; and if every Frenchman was a member of the Roman church, and believed its creed, France might give up the ghost to-morrow—it would never be free.

What is the great obstacle to the improvement of Catholics in America? It is the Catholic church; and just in proportion as an Irishman is wedded to that church, just so do I despair of him. In a less degree, our Protestant Theology is working a similar harm for us.

I believe in a Revival of Religion. There have been several great movements thereto. Not to go out of the Hebrew and Christian church, there are several well known to all of you. That of Moses, Jesus, Luther, the Puritans, the Quakers, the Baptists, the Methodists, Unitarians, Universalists, and the Spiritualists. How were they brought about? In each case, there was a new Theologic idea by a man of genius, or a new application of an old one by a man of talent. Moses taught the people—"There is one God for the Hebrews, to be served by ritual sacrifices in one place." Jesus declared—"There is one God for all mankind, to be served by brotherly love. The walls of Nationality are broke down." Luther taught, — "The infallible Bible is superior to a deceitful Pope. There is freedom of conscience for all men; they are justified by faith in Christ, not by the ritual of Roman priests. Each people must manage its own church affairs." The Puritans declared—"Each church must manage its own affairs, the Bible its only law." The Baptists declared—"Grown men must be baptized all over. No man goes into heaven dry-shod; the priest must wet him from heel to crown. He that believeth and is *mmersed*, shall be saved." The Quaker said—"The Holy Ghost *in* the soul is more than the letter of Scripture *out* of it. Man is free;—not bound by his father's ordinances. Woman is man's equal. The prayer that God hears is in the heart; He needs no words to understand it." The Methodist said—"The Gospel is for the poor and the ignorant," and carried it thither. Unitarians and Universalists declared — "God is

one, not three. He damns nobody forever; hates nobody at all. All men shall land in heaven at last, no matter howsoever badly shipwrecked; if they sink, it is to another sea." The Spiritualists say—"The Bible is not a finality; it is no man's master, it is every man's servant. We, as well as the old prophets, can have communion with the departed. Christ reveals himself directly to us, as much as to Paul and Silas, Peter and James."

Now, in all these cases, there was a new idea; not always a true one, but one which stirred men's souls and called forth religious emotions. What energy did religious truths give the followers of Jesus! What power there was in the early Puritans, Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, mixed with folly! Of course, you expect that in all religious movements. What a spread have the doctrines of Universalists and Unitarians had in eighty years! In 1778, I think there were not ten thousand men in all America who believed the distinctive doctrine of Unitarians and Universalists—the ultimate salvation of all men. Now, how wide is the doctrine spread! How rapidly Spiritualism has gone abroad; yet it has no great man in its ranks, not a philosopher, not a scholar.

When a great religious idea comes new to any man, what enthusiasm it stirs us to! The followers of Jesus did not comprehend his glorious gospel of piety and morality; they thought more of the man than of his doctrine, his life. They made him a God. "Salvation by Christ" was their creed. The idea was new; and though it was false, it was yet a great improvement over Hebraism and Heathenism of that time. It made a new organization of its own, which covered all Europe with churches. But the vigorous life which once dwelt in the soil of Christendom, and threw up that Ecclesiastical flora, and made those handsome shapes of stone fragrant with the beauty of devotion, it is now all gone. The fossil remains of that religious vegetation tell how mighty the life must have been. What was the state's king before the church's bishop? The Pope put his foot on the neck of emperors, for he had the religion of Christendom to back him. It is not so now, even in Europe. There is no more new religious life in Saint Peter's church at Rome, than in the Pyramids of Egypt. Unburied dead men are in one, buried dead men in the other. So far as new thought is concerned, the Pope is only a mummy.



We want a Revival of Religion in the American church which shall be to the church what the Religion of Jesus was to Heathenism and Judaism, which, though useful once, in his day had served out their time, and had no more that they could do. We do not want a Religion hierarchically organized, which shall generate nothing but meeting-houses made of stone, and end at last in a priesthood. We want a Religion democratically organized, generating great political, social, domestic institutions, and ending in a world full of noble men and women, all their faculties developed well, they serving God with that love which casts out fear.

How can we stir that element to emotions fit for such a work? Only by a Theology which shall meet the people's want, a natural and just idea of man, of God, of the relation between them—of religion, life, duty, destination on earth and in heaven; a theology which has its evidences in the world of matter,—all science God's testimony thereto; and in the world of consciousness,—every man bearing within him the "lively oracles" the present witness of his God, his duty and destination. No sect has such a theology; no great sect aims at such, or the life it leads to. The Spiritualists are the only sect that looks forward, and has new fire on its hearth; they alone emancipate themselves from the Bible and the theology of the church, while they also seek to keep the precious truths of the Bible, and all the good things of the church. But even they—I say this modestly; they are a new sect, and everybody wars against them; my criticism I give for their good, in the spirit of hope and tenderness—even they are rapping on coffin lids, listening for ghosts, seeking God and God's truth *beyond* human nature, not *in* human nature. Their religion is Wonder more than Life; not principally addressing itself to the understanding, the imagination, the reason, the conscience, the soul, but to marvellousness more than aught besides. So with many it is amazement, and not elevation. But its function is to destroy the belief in miracles; it will help set many men free from the idols of the old Theologic Den;—no small service, even if it set up new ones of its own; because new they will be less dangerous. I also give thanks for "Spiritualism," and am not surprised at the follies and extravagances, the dishonesty of "mediums," which I partly see and partly hear of. You must always allow for casualties. You cannot

transfer a people from an old Theology to a new one without some breakage and other harm and loss. This is attendant on all human operations. When about to build a meeting-house in the country, of old time, all the town's people came together, on a summer day, for the raising. The village brawler was there, idle boys, loungers, wrestlers, boxers. There was drinking, and swearing now and then. Many got a little hot with liquor. Now and then a spike-pole got erippled, two or three straw hats "perished everlastingly." Some brother was overtaken in a fault, and carried home boozy. But they pinned down the ridgepole with shouting; all summer long the building was getting forward, the steeple grew up at last out from the tower it was rooted in; and in the autumn, there was a harvest of people gathered within its walls, and generation after generation, men went up there for prayers, and holy vows of noble life. Let us always make allowance for casualties, for extravagance, in the old which is fixed, in the new which will become so. What extravagances had the Quakers once, the Christians in Paul's time!

I say, we want a Revival of Religion, such as the world has not seen, yet often longed for. It was the dream even of the Hebrew prophets, looking for the time when the nations should learn war no more, when the sword should be turned into the ploughshare, the spear to the pruning-hook, when all men should be taught of God, when "Holiness unto the Lord" should be on the bells even of the horses. We want a Piety so deep that men shall understand God made man from a perfect motive, of perfect material, for a perfect purpose, and endowed with faculties which are perfect means to that end; so deep, that we shall trust the natural law He writes on the body and in the soul. We want a Morality so wide and firm, that men shall make the Constitution of the Universe the Common Law of all mankind; every day God's day,—life-time not to be let out to us at the sevenths or the seventieths, the larger fraction for wickedness, the lesser for piety and heaven, but the whole of it His, and the whole of it ours also, because we use it all as He meant it, for our good. Then the dwelling-house, the market-house, the court-house, the senate-house, the shop, the ship, the field, the forest, the mine, shall be a temple where the psalm and prayer of Religion goes up from daily, normal, blessed work.

Manly, natural Religion—it is not joining



a Church; it is not to believe a creed — Hebrew, Christian, Catholic, Protestant, Trinitarian, Unitarian, Nothingarian. It is not to keep Sunday idle; to attend meeting; to be wet with water; to read the Bible; to offer prayers in words; to take bread and wine in the meeting-house. I know men who do all these things, and yet give scarce more evidence of piety and morality than the benches where they sit, — wood resting on wood. Other men I know who do none of these things, and are yet among the most religious of God's children. Such things may help you — then use them, in God's name, if you find it so. They may hinder, — then, in God's name, cast them off. Jesus of Nazareth was no Christian, in the ecclesiastical sense of that abused word; and could he come to Boston to-day, and bear the same relation to America in the nineteenth century that he did to Palestine in the first, he might not be crucified, or stoned dead in the streets, because the laws forbid such outrage now; but in the "Conference Meeting of Business Men," the prayer meetings of the grimmer sects, the Revivalists, men and women too, would beseech God to convert him from the wicked belief that his own religion would save his own soul, that our Father in Heaven was effectually to be served by justice and love to his children; and if God could not do that they would pray — "Remove him out of the way, and let his influence *die with him*." I say those things are not religion; helps, or hindrances they may be. Religion itself is something far more inward and living. It is loving God with all your understanding and your heart and soul. It is service of God with every limb of the body, every faculty of the spirit, every power he has given you, every day of your life. That Religion, it is a terror to evil-doers, yet offers them encouragement to repent; it is an inspiration to whoso would love man and love God. Suppose I am converted to such a religion; the sunlight of this idea falls on me for the first time, kindling emotions which spring up as the green grass after April rains. What a change will it make in my landscape! Suppose I have kept a drunkery or a brothel. Then I cast off my sin and labor to restore what before I had thrown down, and in cleanness of new life make mankind and myself amends for my past wickedness.

I carry my religion into my daily work, whatever it may be. I am a street-sweeper, then my piety will come out in my faithful

performance of duty. No drunkenness, profanity, obscenity, hereafter. The faces of my wife and children will be the certificate of my conversion, of my baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire. My character will be the sign that I belong to the true Church of God.

I am a young school mistress, perplexed in my business—all young people are, be their business what it may. Then my religion will appear in the discretion, in the sweetness of temper, the forbearance, with which I feed the little unruly flock, and pasture them on learning. I am President of the United States, when this thought of religion comes to me, and I change my wickedness, and seek with my vast powers to do that justice to my brother men which I wish them, with their humble ones, to do to me.

If a minister is filled with this Religion, it will not let him rest. He must speak, whether men hear or whether they forbear. No fear can scare, no bribe can charm, no friends can coax him down. The Church, the State, the World oppose him, all in vain. "Get thee behind me," he quietly says; and while Satan goes from this other son of man in his triumph, angels come and minister to him. He may have small talents; it matters not. The new power of his religious idea comes into him, and one such man "can chase a thousand, and two ten thousand put to flight." Nay, he gets inspiration from God. He makes the axis of his little glass parallel with the axis of God, and the perpendicular Deity shines through with concentrated light and heat.

What if there were one such minister in each of the three hundred and seventy towns of this State—what a Revival would they make in Massachusetts! What an increase of economy, industry, riches! What a growth of temperance, education, justice, love, in all its forms, — filial, friendly, related, connubial, parental, patriotic, philanthropic love! What if all the thirty thousand Protestant ministers, and the two thousand Catholic priests, in the United States, had such Religion—worked with such theological ideas of Man, God, duty, destination! There would never be another war, staining America with blood; filibustering would be impossible; political oppression, it would not continue a week, the people would not choose a magistrate in the day time whom they must hire watchers to sit up and look after all night, lest he do mischief



a wicked ruler would be as impossible as a ghost in the day time. Slavery would end before the Fourth of July, and on Independence Day, the Mayor of the city might tell the Rear Admiral of the Turks, "My dear sir, we are converted, and as good as African Mahomedans, and there is not a slave in all the United States. Boston has become almost as Christian as Tunis or Algiers!" What a change would come over the structure of society! Co-operative industry would take the place of selfish antagonism. How would that flower of Womanhood expand with fairer, sweeter, and more prophetic bloom! How would the nation's wealth increase! What Education of all—what Welfare now, what Progress for the future! What a generation of sons and daughters would this people raise up! Aye, what missionaries should we send abroad, not to preach ignorance to the heathen, who have enough of it already, but to carry the light of the Gospel of Life to the nations that "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death!"

Such a Revival of Religion—it is possible; one day it will be actual. The ideal in my heart is a prophecy of the real in mankind's actual life. At length the best must be; this is as sure as that God is good. But this Revival will not come by miracle. God does his part by creating us with faculties fit for this glorious destination; by providing us, in the material world, the best means to achieve that destination and get this development. To use these powers and opportunities, it is not God's work, it is yours and mine. There never was a miracle, there never will be. Trust me, what God for once makes right, he will never unmake it into wrong.

This Revival of Religion will not come by prayer of words, although the thirty thousand Protestant ministers and the two thousand Catholic go down on their knees together. In 1620, our Puritan fathers wished to have all New England ploughed up and made fit for farms. Suppose they had gone down on their knees and asked God to do it? Not a furrow would have been turned to-day, not a ploughshare forged or cast. A few weeks ago, London men wanted the Great Eastern launched. What if all the English clergy, Episcopal, Dissenters, had put up prayers in the meeting-houses petitioning God to do this work, and the Queen and Parliament had knelt down on their knees in supplication, saying,—“Have mercy upon us, O Lord! miserable offenders.

There is no health in us. We beseech Thee to launch her, good Lord!” They might have prayed till they were black in the face, the vessel would not stir an inch. But they used the natural means God gave them. The thinkers prayed great scientific thoughts—they prayed steam-engines and hydraulic-rams. The laborers prayed work—they prayed with levers and windlasses, and coal-fire. With sore toil, the hydraulic-rams sweat through their iron skin, twelve inches thick; and the launch took place. Mind gave his right arm to Matter, and Miss Leviathan, on her marriage day, coy, timid, reluctant, walked with him to the water, and they became one. Ere long they will take a whole town's population, a wealth of merchandize, and swim the Atlantic together, breast to breast, stroke after stroke, three thousand miles in a week!

Prayer, the devout helpmeet of work, is the brave man's encouragement, when struggling after perfection. But prayer as a substitute for work,—not a wife, to glad the toil and save the rest, but a witch, to do by magic miracle—that is blasphemy against the true God—sterile and contemptible.

Ministers talk of a “Revival of Religion in answer to prayer!” It will no more come, than the submarine telegraph from Europe to America. It is the effectual fervent *work* of a righteous man that availeth much—his head-work and hand-work. Gossiping before God, talking mere words, asking him to do my duty that is not prayer. I also believe in prayer from the innermost of my heart, else must I renounce my Manhood and the Godhood above and about me. I also believe in prayer. It is the upspringing of my soul to meet the Eternal, and thereby I seek to alter and improve myself, not Thee, Oh Thou Unchangeable, who art perfect from the beginning. Then I mingle my soul with the Infinite Presence. I am ashamed of my wickedness, my cowardice, sloth, fear. New strength comes into me of its own accord, as the sunlight to these flowers which open their little cups. Then I find that he that goeth forth even weeping, bearing this precious seed of prayer, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, and bring his sheaves with him!

This Revival will not come all at once, the lightning shineth from the east to the west, but as the morning comes, little by little, so will it be welcomed too. As that material day-spring from on high comes grateful to grass and trees, to men and women, so will



this Revival come upon our hearts, as natural consequence of such prayer and manly toil — our toilsome prayer, our prayerful toil. It will come as the agriculture of New England came — one little field made ready this year, another next — the Indian Corn growing triumphant amid the black stumps of the oaken forest which the axe had hewn down and the fire had swept away, the Savage looking grimly on, no longer meditating war, but yet wondering at the apples which litter the ground with the ruddy loveliness of unwonted, unexpected health. It is coming already: — the peace-men, the temperance-men, anti-slavery men, educational men, the men of science, poetic men, the reform-men, men of commerce, manufactures, agriculture — every good man, every good woman — all these are helps to it, each digging up and planting his little plot of ground. Good ministers of all denominations — Catholic, Protestant, Trinitarian, Unitarian, Methodist, Baptist, Quaker, Universalist, Spiritualist, — there are thousands of them, — are toiling after that great end, even though they know it not. Many have done something, some much, — one man more than any. His name is not honored in the *Churches* — of course not! Was Jesus in the Temple? They cast him out even from the synagogue. There is a scholarly man in New England, gifted with such genius for literature as no other American has ever shown. He has large power of intuitive perception of the Beautiful, the True, the Just, the Good, the Holy; cultivated singularly well, having the poetic power of pictured speech, not less than the inward eye to see. His life is heroic as a soldier's; he never runs, nor hides, nor stoops, nor stands aside to avoid the shot which hits tall marks: yet is no woman gentler than this unflinching man. He was cradled in the church — it is good for a cradle, not a college, shop or house. He was bred in the ministry, and sat at famous feet. The little town of Concord is the centre of his sphere; its circumference, — that great circle lies far off, hid underneath the foreign horizon of future centuries.

I honor the Chaunceys, the Mayhews, the Freemans, the Buckminsters, the Channings, who taught great truths, and also lived full of nobleness; I thank God for their words, which come directly, or echoed, to your heart and mine. They have gone to their reward. But no living man has done so much as Emerson to waken this Religion in the great Saxon

heart of Americans and Britons. It is not doctrine he teaches — his own creed is not well defined; it is the inspiration of manliness that he imparts. He has never beguiled a man or unsuspecting maid to join a church, to underwrite another's creed, or comply with an alien ritual. But his words and his life charm earnest men with such natural religion as makes them, of their own accord, to trust the Great Soul of all, and refine themselves into noble normal, individual life. In six hours of so many recent weeks, I think he has done more to promote the revival of Piety and Morality in Boston, than all the noisy rant of Calvinistic preaching, Calvinistic singing, and Calvinistic prayer, in the last six months.

What an opportunity there is for you and me to work in this true Revival! No nation offers a field so fair. We can speak and listen, we can print and read, with none to molest or make us afraid. More than all that, we can live as high as we please. There is no government, no church, to lay its iron hands on our heads and say — "Stop there!" Misguiding ministers may believe in the damnation of babies newly born, may pray curses on us all; they cannot light a faggot to burn a man: their spirit is willing, but their flesh is weak! It is a grand age and nation to live in and work for.

The first thing that you and I want is to be religious in this sense — to know the Infinite God, who is perfect Power, perfect Wisdom, perfect Justice, perfect Holiness, and perfect Love. Knowing Him, you cannot fail to love with your understanding and your heart, to love His world about us, within us, and all His laws. The warmth and moisture of the ground, they come out in the grass and in the trees, in the beauty and the fragrance of these violets, in this rose which, "beside his sweetness, is a cure;" and so your and my piety must blossom in our service of God with every limb of the body, every faculty of the spirit — the normal use of every power and opportunity we have, Sundays, Mondays, all time.

Then daily work shall be a gospel, life our continual transfiguration to a nobler growth. We shall bless our town, our nation, our age, our race. When we die, we shall leave the world better because we have lived, with more Welfare now, fitter for Progress hereafter. We shall bear away with us the triumphant result of every trial, every duty, every effort, every tear, every prayer, every suffering, nay, of each longing aspiration after excellence. And



there and then the motherly hand of God shall | been faithful over a few things ; I will make  
be reached out over us, and we shall hear the | thee ruler over many things. Enter thou  
blessed word — “ Come, my beloved, thou hast | into thy Mother’s joy ! ”



